

The problem does not seem to have suggested itself to him, for his State, whether republican or monarchic, is merely the revival of the State of republican or imperial Rome under a modern national form. He is satisfied if he can attain political unity such as has been attained in France or Spain. This attained, he would not improve on ancient institutions in the direction of popular emancipation in the modern sense. He was too narrowly antique, too prematurely born, to see the world with more modern eyes. He has in fact failed to rise to the idea of progress, and in this respect his study of history is particularly barren and one-sided. At most he sees only progress in cycles, the eternal iteration of what has been. Man has been, is, and will be ever the same, and his history will never advance beyond itself. The past is the measure of the future. There is no improvement, only change. Evolution is unknown to him. Moreover, man is not good, but essentially bad, as Luther and Calvin were insisting, or about to insist, in their new theological fashion. Man is only good if he is obliged to be it, and this being so, he cannot be depended on to reform himself. He sees in history no trace of the essential goodness that raises mankind into the higher divine life. Of this higher life he knows nothing. He closes his eyes to those great movements which have been initiated and carried to great results by the unselfish devotion of masses of men. For him there is no gospel of self-denial and passionate self-surrender to the ideal to transform the world and lead it step by step to higher things. He does not indeed overlook the part that Christianity has played in the world, but he has no relish for Christian virtue compared with pagan virtue, and mediaeval Christianity certainly had little claim to be regarded as a regenerating force in the world. In Machiavelli's day no thinking man had anything but contempt for it. Rome was a scandal even in the Italy of the fifteenth century. Humanity does not develop in good or in evil. Its path is no ascent, but a dead level, which the moderns tread, as the ancients have trodden before them. Progress, reform, are limited by the past. If so, humanity might well despair, with Machiavelli, of the future, though from a different reason. If antiquity had attained the limit of emancipation for the mass, the mass had ample justification for its despair. Happily,